Singapore-India defence cooperation

*240. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Singapore and India have signed a defence cooperation agreement;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Navies of the two countries have held joint exercises; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Singapore have signed an Agreement concerning cooperation in the field of defence on 13th October, 2003.

The areas identified for military cooperation with Singapore cover exchange of military expertise and personnel, military training, exchange of visits, bilateral naval exercises and participation in defence related seminars and symposia.

The Indian Navy has held joint exercises with the Republic of Singapore Navy and the last such exercise was held in March, 2003 off the coast of Kochi.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Mining by State Government companies/PSUs

1543. SHRI T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
DR. A.R. KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's order authorizing State Government companies or undertakings to do regular coal or lignite mining has been welcomed by States;

(b) whether many States have shown interest to take up coal mining as business through joint ventures with private investors;

(c) whether Government has taken away all purchasing powers that were delegated to Coal India Limited and marketing rights enjoyed by CIL for non-core sector consumers;

(d) whether as most State Governments do not have expertise or money to undertake coal mining activities, they are looking for private partners; and

(e) if so, to what extent they have been successful?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL): (a) and (b) A few State Governments have responded and requested for allocation of coal blocks. However, no request for taking up coal mining as a business in joint venture specially with private investors has been received.

(c) Barring procurement of explosives, powers have been delegated to subsidiary companies of Coal India Limited (CIL) for making their own purchases. However, development of application software coalnet in Xth Plan and activities related to R&D schemes will continue to be dealt with at CIL level. Power relating to marketing in the non-core sector have been delegated completely in case of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), Western Coalfields Limited (WCL) and South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL).

(d) and (e) Questions do not arise in view of answer given to part (b) above.

Emission of gas from coal mines

†1544. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI LAJPAT RAI:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have conducted any study in respect of human use of the gas emitting out of the coal mines;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.